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Subject: Colchester Budget
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Hello!

The Board of Ed's role in the budget is to present the needs of the schools to the town. The schools consist of students, teachers, staff, and buildings. The student needs are high right now: mental health is at a low, student failure rate is high, and students need much academic and mental health support as they transition out of the pandemic. The teachers are exhausted. We have worked so hard adapting, adjusting, and finding ways to help our students succeed with less support staff than needed. The buildings need maintenance as always.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Ed to present the needs of the school system to the town. From roofing to carpets to more paraprofessionals in kindergarten classes to more mental health supports in the high school, SO MUCH is needed. It is the board's responsibility to learn about the budget presented from the administration and to ask questions. Do some of the cuts put yet more responsibilities on overburdened teachers? Talk to teachers, talk to students, talk to staff- learn about what the schools need. Then present the needs of the school system to the town.

If the town knows what the schools need, then they are very likely to support responsible budget increases to ensure our students are receiving the support and education they need and that teachers are supported in their work. Please give the town the opportunity to vote to support education rather than taking that chance away before it even gets to referendum.

Being both a teacher and a taxpayer in town often leads to many juxtaposed emotions but I am very grateful for all you do. Teachers deserve to feel respected, listened to, and supported in more than just words. Thank you for all you do to support our students, our families, our teachers, and our taxpayers.

Meaghan Kehoegreen